

education of our children while offering substantial increases in Federal funds to help accomplish that goal.

I applaud my colleagues the ranking Democrat on the Education and Workforce Committee, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for his work with Chairman BOEHNER and officials of the White House to reach a consensus on a bipartisan school improvement bill.

As passed by the committee H.R. 1 authorizes \$24 billion in funding on ESEA programs, representing a 29-percent increase over the current fiscal year and well above the funding levels provided for in President Bush's own budget.

While these badly needed increase makes this is a good bill there still remain a number of political obstacles—such as the misguided budget reconciliation bill which this body passed last week—which must be overcome before we can have a sound bill. It is important to point out, that in their budget, the Republican leadership cut funding for education below even the President's request in order to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy.

I would like to urge my colleagues on both sides of the isle not to forget to need for funding for school construction and modernization. Across the country, thousands of school buildings no longer function as effective places of learning, or even as decent places of shelter. Too many of our children are being left behind in schools with moldy walls, peeling paint, inadequate heat, poor ventilation, broken plumbing, leaky roofs, substandard electrical service, and rodent and insect infestations. School repairs are a massive and expensive problem that school districts cannot face alone. They need Federal help.

For this reason, Mr. Chairman, I would oppose any amendment to restore the President's choice proposal and I am disappointed at the adopted rule to block any amendment on school construction and modernization. My dear colleague Congressman MAJOR OWENS introduced one of those amendments. Congressman OWEN's amendment proposed \$20 billion for school construction, renovation and repair, provide schools located in underserved communities with funding to repair leaking roofs and faulty plumbing; ensure that schools built before WWII do not continue to contribute to childhood illnesses; and modernize more than 150,000 schools nationwide.

I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Congressman UNDERWOOD for offering an amendment to title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to include general assistance for certain outlying areas. The General Assistance Grant was established by section 4501 of the Elementary Act 1965, as amended, and provided for general assistance to improve education in, my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands. No appropriations have been provided from this program since FY 1994, thus slowing almost to a halt, the incipient progress we were beginning to make in our education system. Mr. Chairman, while we fully recognize that it takes more than just money to make an educational system work well, this grant would give the Virgin Islands Department of Education, a tremendous and needed boost, in its ongoing efforts to improve the education it provides to our children. I am disappointed that the Rules Committee did not make Mr. UNDERWOOD's amendment in order.

This notwithstanding, the bill before us today is a big improvement over what the

committee began considering. It provides substantial new resources, including \$4 billion more for elementary and secondary education for next year compared to this year, in exchange for higher standards and tough accountability rules, which all of us want and support.

I applaud the committee's Democrats as well as the Republicans who voted in committee to eliminate private school vouchers from this bill. Mr. Chairman, our public schools are plagued with enough problems already. We don't need to add to those problems by taking funding away from our schools in the form of vouchers.

The bill we are considering today, Mr. Chairman, represents a compromise, which is what being a member of this body is all about. No side, neither Republican nor Democrat gets what they want all the time. That is what the Framers of our country intended when they created the principle of separation of powers. My constituents and the children of the Virgin Islands will benefit from the increased funding represented in this bipartisan bill. I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to address this important measure to reform and improve our public education system.

As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1, I, like many of my colleagues, was disappointed at some of the changes that the bill underwent during committee consideration. For instance, I believe that the school choice provisions that the President outlined in his education reform package represented a reasonable compromise. He provided a graduated series of steps that bolstered a failing school's efforts to improve without jeopardizing the students who attend that school awaiting improvement. His three-year program recognized that every year a child is in school is a precious opportunity to instill knowledge in her mind and a love of learning in her soul.

I intend to support amendments that will be offered on the floor to restore these school choice provisions to the bill, and I am hopeful that these efforts will succeed. But, in the event that a majority of my colleagues do not share my belief in empowering parents through school choice, I am likely to still support this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. There are many innovative and important proposals included in H.R. 1. It consolidates federal programs, cutting their number by half. It gives local school districts flexibility to transfer up to 50% of federal funding between programs—that is 10 times more flexibility than they are now afforded. It helps all parents—rich and poor alike—to get their children the after-school, tutoring, or remedial assistance they need if they are in low-performing schools.

While it may not include everything I would like, it represents a positive step forward. I commend Chairman BOEHNER and the Republicans and Democrats of the House Education and Workforce Committee for their hard work in crafting a compromise that keeps the dialogue open and keeps education reform moving forward.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, today the House is taking up extremely important legislation, H.R. 1, a bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Although the bipartisan support for this bill is encouraging, just two weeks ago the republicans

passed a budget resolution that committed no new resources for education. In fact, the budget resolution provided less than the amount the President requested by \$900 million for fiscal year 2002 and by \$21.4 billion over ten years. Instead of providing new resources for education, the conference report set funding levels equal to the amount needed, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), just to keep up with inflation. By contrast, H.R. 1 as reported authorizes approximately \$5.5 billion more for elementary and secondary education programs for fiscal year 2002 than the \$18.5 billion appropriated in fiscal year 2001.

This difference between the funding levels authorized in H.R. 1 and the funds committed to education in the budget conference report confirms my concern about the Republican budget. Although Republicans claim to support investments in priorities such as education, their budget did not commit the necessary resources. Furthermore, last week we voted on an unfair rule for H.R. 1 which prevented Democrats from offering key education priorities as amendments. There is nothing in the bill addressing class-size reduction, school modernization or the need to provide adequate funding authorizations for bilingual and migrant education.

The absence of a specific class size reduction program in the bill is unfortunate. H.R. 1 combines professional development and class size. In my opinion, schools should not be forced to choose between reducing class size and providing high quality professional development. Research clearly shows that reducing class size, particularly in the early grades, improves student achievement.

This bill also falls short of providing enough resources for migrant students. In just the past two years, the average number of dollars spent per migrant student has declined by 11 percent. This bill's proposed increase in migrant education funding does not go nearly far enough to reverse that decline.

The bill further fails migrant students by omitting strong provisions to create a migrant student records transfer system. Such a system would eliminate two serious problems faced by migrant students: the health risks caused by multiple unnecessary vaccinations and the denial of high school graduation because of missing records of earned credits. H.R. 1 instead contains weak language that has already been in place for years and produced no results. We should not forgo the opportunity to ensure that migrant children are not left behind.

In addition, this country faces a dramatic challenge in bringing schools up to minimally acceptable conditions as well as meeting school construction and modernization needs for the 21st century. In my district there are schools that finally have access to computers and technology, but don't have enough electrical outlets to run the technology. I am sure that this is the case in school districts across the country where the average school building is 42 years old. States and localities cannot reasonably be expected to carry the incredible financial burden of building and repairing our schools. Well-maintained schools are critically important for the health and safety of our students. Federal help is not only appropriate, it is essential.

Mr. Chairman, the nation's priorities in education will not be met within the confines of the budget resolution that was passed on May